

PROMPT RESOURCE / THEATRE STUDIES

# CLOUDSTREET



6 MAY – 16 JUN

BLACK SWAN  
STATE THEATRE  
COMPANY



**MALTHOUSE  
PROMPT**

SEASON



*Malthouse Theatre and Black Swan State Theatre Company present Cloudstreet. Cloudstreet was first commissioned by Black Swan State Theatre Company and Company B Belvoir in 1998.*

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**PROMPT PACK CREATED FOR MALTHOUSE PROMPT—MALTHOUSE THEATRE'S YOUTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

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SEASON





SEASON

# YOUR JOURNEY WITH MALTHOUSE THEATRE AWAITS.

At Malthouse Theatre we collaborate with local and international artists to create inventive performances that cut to the core of the human experience. Theatre has the power to interrogate, disrupt and to be an agent of change—and we think it always should. At Malthouse Theatre, the work we produce explores the world personally, socially and politically. Based in a dedicated venue, The Coopers Malthouse in Melbourne, we are a home for live experiences that entertain and provoke a dialogue with and within audiences. Welcome to Malthouse Theatre.

SEASON





# VIDEO RESOURCES



INITIAL PRE-REHEARSAL INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR MATTHEW LUTTON

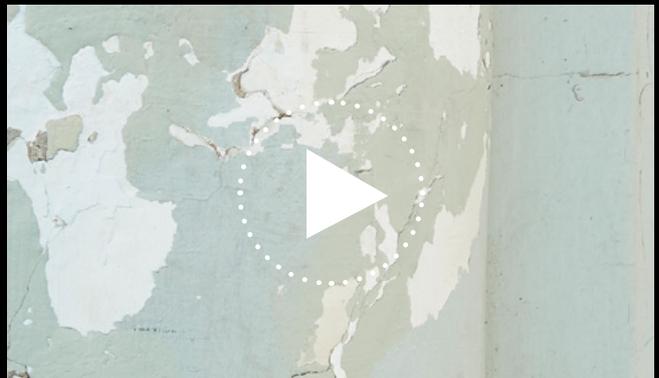


REHEARSAL INTERVIEW WITH CAST MEMBERS IAN MICHAEL, ARIELLE GRAY & BERT LABONTÉ

# BONUS MATERIALS



**DESIGN PRESENTATION** / An internal recording of the initial design presentation for Malthouse Theatre's team, in December 2018. Contains spoilers! Don't watch this video until you've seen the show.



**ASIDE PODCAST** / Audio Interview with Director Matthew Lutton for *The Aside*, a regular podcast for Victorian Drama teachers and students.

# CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



**MATTHEW LUTTON**  
DIRECTOR



**ARIELLE GRAY**  
CAST



**BRENNA HARDING**  
CAST



**NATASHA HERBERT**  
CAST



**BERT LABONTÉ**  
CAST



**EBONY MCGUIRE**  
CAST



**MIKAYLA MERKS**  
CAST



**IAN MICHAEL**  
CAST



**BENJAMIN OAKES**  
CAST



**SCOTT SHERIDAN**  
CAST



**GUY SIMON**  
CAST



**GREG STONE**  
CAST



**ALISON WHYTE**  
CAST



**ZOË ATKINSON**  
SET & COSTUME DESIGN



**PAUL JACKSON**  
LIGHTING DESIGN



**J. DAVID FRANZKE**  
SOUND DESIGN



**ELIZABETH DRAKE**  
COMPOSITION



**KATT OSBORNE**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



**NATALIE ROWAN**  
STAGE MANAGER



**DANAE CRAWFORD**  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER



**ANGUS ROBSON**  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

# INTRODUCTION /

Welcome to the Malthouse Theatre's Theatre Studies Prompt Pack. The following notes and activities are intended to support VCE Theatre Studies students and their teachers in exploration and study of the Malthouse Theatre's playlisted production of *Cloudstreet* both prior to attending the show and following attendance at the play in performance. The contents of the pack relate to Unit 3, Area of Study 3, Outcome 3 – Analysing and evaluating theatre.

The pre-show activities will provide you with information about Tim Winton, his novel *Cloudstreet*, the play version of *Cloudstreet* and other interpretations of the work. We have also included an initial video interview with Director Matthew Lutton. To get you started, there are some suggestions as to how teachers might prepare their students prior to seeing the play staged.

The post-show activities are designed to support deeper study and learning following your experience of *Cloudstreet* as an audience member. Remember that the Prompt Pack information does not provide definitive answers. The purpose of the Prompt Pack is to provide some inroads and information about the production. You will need to engage in your own broader study and discussion.

Make sure you watch the interviews with members of the cast and Director Matthew Lutton. They provide some wonderful insights into the way the actors are engaging with the play and each other in the rehearsal room.

I am confident that this amazing production of such an iconic work will be an extraordinary theatrical experience for you and your students.



**Robyn Kay /**  
Theatre Studies Prompt Pack Author

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE / MATTHEW LUTTON



When I first read Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* it helped me understand what it meant to be growing up in Perth. It broadened my understanding of living in the world's most isolated city. The feeling of distance, aloneness, the sense of the supernatural power of the Swan River, and the intensity of the plains. It affirmed that I was living on haunted land—a land filled with wisdom and scared of its history.

One of the remarkable qualities of *Cloudstreet* is that it means something different to everyone who experiences it. It is the story of two families who are forced together against their will, on land they have no connection to. It is a story about being homeless and making a new home. It is a story about culture, spirituality,

and history that has been repressed and denied, demanding to be heard.

This is not the story of Australia. This is the story of two families who spend 20 years coming to understand that there is no 'us' and 'them', only 'us' and 'us'. That the voices of those who are missing, lost and forgotten in our land, are always living on with us, and that we must think into the future with these lives in our hearts and minds.

This theatrical adaptation of Tim Winton's story offers a very different experience to reading the novel. It offers a community, where an audience has the opportunity to live, for a period of time, with the characters of *Cloudstreet* and the spirits of the house, and to worry for them, want for them, and love with them.

## TIM WINTON ON *CLOUDSTREET*



I don't pretend to understand the phenomenon at all, but *Cloudstreet* seems to have a life of its own, and since it was published in 1991 I've mostly been reduced to the role of quizzical onlooker. Note to self: shrug and smile awkwardly.

Initially, I was a bit sceptical about the original Black Swan State Theatre Company/ Belvoir St Theatre adaptation in 1998. I just couldn't see how it could be done. But when I finally saw the play I was shaken by its emotional power and I came to realise that something special was happening up on stage

that I couldn't account for, but just had to dumbly acknowledge.

A lot of people seemed to feel the same way.

*Cloudstreet* is a big, baggy story and finding ways to bring it to life on stage was no simple business 20 years ago, and it can't have gotten any easier since, so I appreciate Malthouse Theatre taking up the challenge with such brio. Mad buggers. Making theatre isn't for the faint-hearted. It takes a lot of art-workers to lift something like this into view and bear aloft over the journey. Brave souls, all. I salute them.

SEASON



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## CAST &amp; CREATIVE BIOS



**MATTHEW LUTTON**  
DIRECTOR

Matthew Lutton is Malthouse Theatre's Artistic Director and Co-CEO. Prior to this, he was Malthouse Theatre's Associate Director and the Artistic Director of ThinIce in Perth. Directing credits for Malthouse Theatre include *Melancholia*, *Bliss*, *Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*, *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man*, *Away*, *Edward II*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *I Am a Miracle*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *The Bloody Chamber*, *Dance of Death*, *Pompeii, L.A.*, *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *Die Winterreise* and *Tartuffe*. For STC he has directed *The Trial*, *The Mysteries: Genesis* and *The Duel*. Other directing credits include *Love Me Tender* for Belvoir and *Don't Say the Words* for Griffin Theatre Company. His opera directing credits include *Make No Noise* for the Bavarian State Opera, Strauss' *Elektra* for Opera Australia and West Australian Opera and Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* for New Zealand Opera.



**ARIELLE GRAY**  
CAST

Arielle is a performer, theatre-maker, puppeteer, voice-over artist and improviser. She is a founding member of The Last Great Hunt theatre company and has created, performed in and toured original, inventive and engaging theatre. Malthouse Theatre credits include *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Credits for The Last Great Hunt include *Lé Nør* (Perth Festival), *The Advisors*, *Stay With Us* (as Director), *Monroe & Associates* (Sydney Festival), *Improvement Club*, *Falling Through Clouds* (Sydney Festival), *All That Glitters*, *Old Love*, *Minnie and Mona Play Dead* (Brisbane Festival) and the Helpmann Award nominated productions *New Owner* and *It's Dark Outside*. Other theatre credits include *My Robot* (Barking Gecko Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Dark Room* and *Pool [No Water]* (Black Swan State Theatre Company) and the Blue Room Theatre Award-winning *Laika: A Staged Radio Play* (Second Chance Theatre).



**BRENNA HARDING**  
CAST

Brenna is one of Australia's most exciting young actors. Theatre credits include *The Wolves* (Belvoir), *The Almighty Sometimes*, *The Bleeding Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company), *The Gulf* (Lume Productions) and *Jumpy* (MTC/STC). Television credits include *Black Mirror*, *Puberty Blues*, *Secret City*, *The Code*, *My Place*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *A Place to Call Home* and *Glitch*. Film credits include *The Turning*, which premiered at the 2012 Melbourne International Film Festival. Brenna is on the board of anti-homophobia organisation Wear it Purple and founder of the Sydney-based feminist group Moonlight Feminists. Brenna was the recipient of the 2014 Marie Bashir Peace Prize and a 2012 Logie Award for Most Popular New Female Talent. She was nominated for a Graham Kennedy Award for Most Outstanding New Talent and an AACTA Award for Best Young Actor. Brenna was a 2018 finalist for the Heath Ledger Scholarship. She is currently completing a Bachelor of Communications and Creative Intelligence and Innovation at UTS.

# CAST & CREATIVE BIOS



**NATASHA HERBERT**  
CAST

Previous work with Malthouse Theatre includes *Trustees*, *Away*, *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *Happiness*, *Kitten*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Rapture*, *Still Angela*, *Black Sequin Dress*, *Honour*, *Love Child* and *Wolf*. Natasha has also appeared in *The Father*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Dreamlife of Butterflies*, *God of Carnage*, *Pillowman*, *The Balcony*, *The Three Sisters*, *Hysteria*, *I'm Not Rappaport* and *I Hate Hamlet* (MTC), *War Horse* (Global Creatures), *The Unspoken Word is Joe*, *The Large Breast or the Upside-down Bell*, *Inconsolable* (Griffin), *The Country* (Belvoir), *The Wall* (Ranters Theatre), *Small Metal Objects* (Back to Back Theatre) and many more. Film credits include *The Menkoff Method*, *X*, *Lake Mungo*, *Corroboree* and *Boytown*. Television credits include *Neighbours*, *The Time of Our Lives*, *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *City Homicide*, *MDA* and *Stingers*. Natasha was awarded Green Room Awards for Best Fringe Actress in *Portrait of Dora* and for Best Ensemble in *I Heart John McEnroe* and *On the Misconception of Oedipus*.



**BERT LABONTÉ**  
CAST

Bert is one of Australia's leading actors. Malthouse Theatre credits include *I Am a Miracle*, *Timeshare* and *The Good Person of Szechwan*. Select theatre credits include *The Book of Mormon* (Watchtower Productions), *All My Sons* and *The Grenade* (STC), *Dreamlover* (GFO), *Phedre* (Bell Shakespeare), *Birdland*, *Rupert*, *Elling*, *The Mountaintop*, *Clybourne Park*, *Next to Normal*, *A Behanding in Spokane*, *Richard III*, *The Hypocrite*, *Don Juan in Soho* (MTC), *When I Fall in Love - The Nat King Cole Story*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Essential Theatre). Musical theatre credits include *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *Let's Get It On*, *Chess*, *Kismet*, *Grey Gardens*, *Pippin*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Guys and Dolls*. Select Film credits include *Animal Kingdom* and *Rats and Cats*. Television credits include *Wentworth*, *Winners and Losers*, *Upper Middle Bogan*, *Lowdown*, *Wilfred*, *Sea Patrol*, *City Homicide*, *Bogan Pride*, *Neighbours* and *Blue Heelers*. Bert received a Helpmann Award for *An Officer and a Gentleman* and has been nominated for several Green Room Awards.



**EBONY MCGUIRE**  
CAST

Ebony is an actor, writer, facilitator and a WAAPA graduate. *Cloudstreet* is Ebony's Malthouse Theatre debut. Her theatre credits include *Casting Doubts* (WAAPA), *What Do They Call Me?* (The Blue Room), *Kep Kaatijin* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company), *The Fever* and *The Fret* (Yirra Yaakin/National Playwriting Festival), *Coranderrk* (Ilbjerri Theatre Company), *A Scandal in Weimar*, *Outside In* (wit incorporated) and *Caliban* (Western Edge Youth Arts). Ebony was a facilitator in Culture 2.0 | Respecting Yourself | Respect Your Culture workshop (Yirra Yaakin) and was a part of the development of the Shakespeare Sonnets in Noongar workshop (Yirra Yaakin). She has participated in creative developments for MTC, Black Hole Theatre Company and Yirra Yaakin with Bell Shakespeare in 2018.

## CAST &amp; CREATIVE BIOS

**MIKAYLA MERKS**

CAST

Mikayla is a Perth-based actor and a recent graduate of WAAPA. *Cloudstreet* is Mikayla's first mainstage production since graduating in 2018. Mikayla will also feature in Perth's Fringe World production of *FRONT*, which is a part of the 2019 Summer Nights program.

**IAN MICHAEL**

CAST

Ian is an award-winning actor and Noongar man from Western Australia. Credits for Malthouse Theatre include *Blak Cabaret*. Other theatre credits include *Our Town*, *Let the Right One In* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), national and international tour of *HART* (She Said Theatre), *Flashblaks*, *Northwest of Nowhere* (Ilbjerri Theatre Company), *The Kid* (MTC) and the Yellamundie First Peoples Playwriting Festival (Sydney Festival). Screen credits include *Where are the Warriors?*, *Needle* and *Offspring*. He was the recipient of Melbourne Fringe Festival's Most Outstanding Indigenous Actor in 2013 and 2015 and was awarded Best Emerging Artist at Adelaide Fringe in 2016. In 2018, he was the assistant director for *Skylab* (Black Swan State Theatre Company/Yirra Yaakin). Currently, Ian is the Resident Artist at Black Swan State Theatre Company. He is a WAAPA graduate.

**BENJAMIN OAKES**

CAST

Benjamin is a Geelong-based actor and sound artist. He is a member of Back to Back Theatre's Theatre of Speed and a founder of sound art group Noise Scavengers. He recently appeared in Matchbox Pictures' and Back to Back Theatre's co-production, *Oddlands*. Ben also featured in the recent short film *Friend for Life* and several training videos for the NDS. He has performed in many Theatre of Speed live productions since 2015. Ben has performed with artists such as The Amplified Elephants, Adam Simmons, Belinda Woods, James Hullick and Dave Brown. Ben was diagnosed with autism at the age of four.

# CAST & CREATIVE BIOS



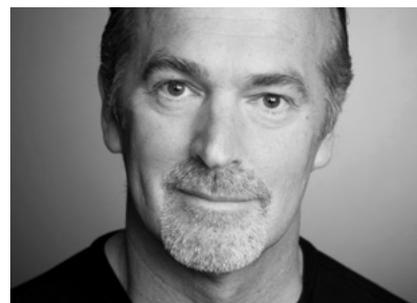
**SCOTT SHERIDAN**  
CAST

*Cloudstreet* is Scott's Malthouse Theatre debut. Recent credits include *Luna Gale* (Ensemble Theatre) and *In a Dark Dark Wood* (Barking Gecko Theatre). Other credits include *The Witches* (Griffin), *Rupert* (MTC), *Hamlet* (Bell Shakespeare), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Arcadia*, *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest* (Sport for Jove), *Drake the Amazing* (Darlinghurst Theatre) and *Stones in His Pockets* (Critical Stages). Screen credits include *Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*, *Careless Love* and *Marley Someone*. Scott is a creative with General Legends and has written and featured in the short films *Undedicated* (Austin Film Festival) and *Unwanted Friend* (Tropfest). Scott is a WAAPA graduate and has studied at The Second City and iO Theatre Chicago. He is a proud MEAA member.



**GUY SIMON**  
CAST

Guy is an Australian actor and a NIDA graduate. Credits for Malthouse Theatre include *Blaque Showgirls*. Other credits include *The Harp in the South*, *The Battle of Waterloo*, *Stolen* (STC), *Jasper Jones* (Belvoir/MTC), *The Myth Project: TWIN* (MTC), *Black Diggers* (QTC), *Strangers In Between* (Cameron Lukey), *This Fella*, *My Memory* (Moogahlin Performing Arts), *I am Man* (Browns Mart Theatre), *Junction* (Bakehouse Theatre) and *Lucky* (IPAN Productions). Film credits include *Undertow* and *Around the Block*. Television credits include *The Wrong Girl*, *Redfern Now*, *A Chance Affair* and *Occupation: Native*. In 2017, Guy received a Helpmann Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Play for *Jasper Jones*.



**GREG STONE**  
CAST

Greg Stone is well known to Australian theatre audiences and has performed in over 80 productions with major theatre companies. Theatre credits include *A Doll's House Part 2*, *The Weir*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Clybourne Park*, *Poor Boy*, *Blackbird*, *A Little Night Music*, *Angels In America* (MTC), *Oklahoma!*, *Funny Girl* (The Production Company), *Hir*, *Hamlet*, *Babyteeth*, *Stuff Happens* (Belvoir), *Ladies in Black* (QTC/MTC), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* (Black Swan State Theatre Company) and *Once* (GFO Attractions). Television credits include *Ms Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*, *Glitch*, *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Underbelly*, *Winners and Losers*, *Neighbours*, *Secret City*, *The Ex-PM* and *Offspring*. Select film credits include *The Sunset Six*, *Is This the Real World*, *Swerve*, *Oranges and Sunshine*, *Van Diemen's Land* and *The Bank*. Greg has been nominated for several Sydney Theatre, Helpmann and Green Room Awards. He was awarded a Helpmann Award and Green Room Award for Best Male Actor in *Stuff Happens*.

## CAST &amp; CREATIVE BIOS



**ALISON WHYTE**  
CAST

Alison Whyte is one of Australia's most accomplished and celebrated actors, with an outstanding reputation in theatre, film and television. Malthouse Theatre credits include *Love and Information*, *The Bloody Chamber*, *Optimism* and *Tartuffe*. Select theatre credits include *Faith Healer* (Belvoir/MTC), *The Testament of Mary*, *Travelling North* (STC), *Last Man Standing*, *Clybourne Park*, *All About My Mother*, *Richard III* (MTC), *Hand to God* (Vass Theatre Productions), *Australia Day* (MTC/STC), *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (MTC/Belvoir) and *Rising Water* (Black Swan State Theatre Company). Select film credits include *The Dressmaker*, *Centreplace*, *The Jammed*, *Subterano* and *Saturday Night*. Television credits include *The Kettering Incident*, *Glitch*, *Playing For Keeps*, *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Tangle*, *Satisfaction* and *Frontline*. Alison has received multiple industry awards.



**ZOË ATKINSON**  
SET & COSTUME DESIGN

Zoë studied Design for Performance at the Prague Academy of the Performing Arts, the International Institute of Figurative Theatre and the Institute de la Marionette. Malthouse Theatre credits include *The Odyssey*, *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*. Other works with Matthew Lutton include *Elektra* (WA Opera) and *The Flying Dutchman* (New Zealand Opera). Zoë was the Artistic Associate and Designer for Perth Festival's opening events *HOME* in 2016, *Boorna Waanginy* in 2017 and *The Museum of Water* in 2018. Zoë is currently designing *Life of Galileo* with Belvoir. She has received a Helpmann Award for Best Costume Design for *The Odyssey* and a nomination for *Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*.



**PAUL JACKSON**  
LIGHTING DESIGN

Paul Jackson is a multi-award-winning designer who works across Australia and internationally. Design credits include *Blasted*, *Melancholia*, *Bliss*, *The Testament of Mary*, *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man*, *Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*, *Away*, *I Am a Miracle*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Meow Meow's Little Mermaid* (Malthouse Theatre), *Mary Stuart*, *Love and Information*, *The Histrionic*, *The Trial* (STC/Malthouse Theatre), *True West*, *The Mysteries: Genesis* (STC), *Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, *Phedre*, *Tartuffe*, *Julius Caesar* (Bell Shakespeare), *Seventeen*, *Nora*, *Oedipus Rex* (Belvoir), *Arbus and West*, *Gloria*, *The Children*, *Three Little Words*, *Hay Fever* and *Di and Viv and Rose* (MTC). Paul has received a Helpmann Award, a Sydney Theatre Award, seven Green Room Awards, three Australian Production Design Guild Awards and 31 Green Room Award nominations. He is the current recipient of an Australia Council for the Arts Fellowship. Paul is a graduate of the University of Melbourne and RMIT.

# CAST & CREATIVE BIOS



**J. DAVID FRANZKE**  
SOUND DESIGN

Malthouse Theatre credits include *Away, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Night on Bald Mountain, Pompeii, L.A.*, and *The Odyssey*. Select design credits include *Australia Day* (STC/MTC), *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, *Venus & Adonis* (Bell Shakespeare/Malthouse Theatre), *Come Away with Me to the End of the World*, *Song, Intimacy, Holiday* (Ranters Theatre), *The Odd Couple*, *The Beast*, *The Joy of Text*, *The Grenade*, *August: Osage County*, *Don Juan in Soho*, *Birthrights*, *The Recruit* (MTC) and *Aviary* (Balletlab). Film credits include *X* and *Acolytes*. David has received Green Room Awards for Composition and Sound Design for *Away, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Pompeii, L.A.* and for Outstanding Contribution to Design and Technology for *Skin Flick*.



**ELIZABETH DRAKE**  
COMPOSITION

Elizabeth Drake is a pianist and composer. Malthouse Theatre credits include *Cargo*, *Still Angela* and *Black Sequin Dress*. Other credits include *Nightfall* (Adelaide Festival), *Top Girls* (MTC) and *Grounded* (Red Stitch). Select film credits include *Looking for Grace* (Venice Film Festival), *Japanese Story* (Cannes Film Festival), *Road to Nhill*, *For Love or Money* and *Black Man's Houses*. Pianist credits include Perth International Arts Festival, WOMADelaide, IWAKI Auditorium ABC Classic FM and Ballroom Flinders Street Station. Elizabeth has been awarded a Green Room Award, a AFI-AACTA Award for Feature Film Original Music, an APRA-AGSC Feature Film Screen Music Award and a Film Critics Circle Award.



**KATT OSBORNE**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Katt is a director, producer and theatre-maker. She is currently the Artistic Director of Riptide Youth Performance Company. She was a co-founder of The Last Great Hunt and a Resident Artist at Black Swan State Theatre Company. Directing credits include *Unheimlich* (Independent/Performing Lines), *The 1's and the 0's*, *And Everything in Between*, *Walk With Me*, *Some Kind of Disaster*, *Queen Leah* (Riptide), *The Crossing*, *Elephants*, *Minnie and Mona Play Dead* (The Last Great Hunt) and many other independent theatre productions. Opera directing credits include Strauss' *Ariadne Auf Naxos* and Menotti's *The Old Maid* and *The Thief* (Operabox). Assistant directing credits include *Our Town*, *Xenides*, *The Lady Aoi* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Dr Seuss' The Lorax* (The Old Vic), *The Removalists* (Perth Theatre Company) and *Antigone* (ThinIce). Katt was a recipient of a WA Young Achiever of the Year for Arts, a Golden Key Honorary Membership, a PAWA Best New Play Award and a 2013 Fringe World Martin Sims Best New WA Work Award.

## CAST &amp; CREATIVE BIOS



**NATALIE ROWAN**  
STAGE MANAGER

Natalie is an experienced stage manager working in Australia and internationally.

*Cloudstreet* is her first Malthouse Theatre production. Credits include *Soweto Gospel Choir*, *Operation Ouch Live* (Andrew Kay and Associates), *Emma Matthews: The Space Between* (Arts Centre Melbourne), *Sleeping Beauty*, *A Knight Avengers Tale*, *The Adventures of Peter Pan and Tinkerbell*, *Cinderella*, *Aladdin and his Wondrous Lamp*, *Snow White Winter Family Musical*, (Bonnie Lythgoe Productions), *Common Ground* (Chunky Move), *Calamity Jane* (One Eyed Man Productions), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Australian Tour Lunchbox Theatrical Productions), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Luckiest Productions/Tinderbox Productions), *Santa Claus and The Christmas Adventure* (Jamie Wilson Productions), *Cinderella*, *Aladdin* (Blue Genie Entertainment), *The Palm Court*, *September Tide*, (Charles Vance Productions), *Dirty Dusting*, *Motherhood The Musical*, *Menopause The Musical* (Robert C Kelly) and *Mother Goose* (Wish/Imagine Theatre).



**DANAE CRAWFORD**  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Danae has a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Stage Management from WAAPA.

*Cloudstreet* is her first mainstage production. Danae has just completed a stage management internship on *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* in Melbourne. During her time at WAAPA, she was involved in multiple productions in various roles. She has stage managed for several Perth Fringe World Festival shows and the 2018 Propel Youth Arts' KickstART Festival music stages. In 2018, Danae was awarded WAAPA's Peter Smith Award for Stage Management.



**ANGUS ROBSON**  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Angus Robson is a theatre production all-rounder working across Australia. His previous roles include stage manager, production manager and an operator for music, contemporary dance and ballet. He has worked with Chunky Move, Tracks Dance Company, Artback NT and Browns Mart Theatre amongst others. Angus has a Bachelor of Contemporary Music from Charles Darwin University.



# CURRICULUM FOCUS



The notes in this Prompt Pack are intended to support VCE Theatre Studies teachers and students in their preparation for and exploration of Malthouse Theatre's production of *Cloudstreet*. This play has been VCAA playlisted for study for Unit 3, Area of Study 3, Outcome 3.

## INITIAL CRUCIAL INFORMATION /

### The requirement to only study Act One (Part One) of *Cloudstreet*:

Before using the pack, there are some very important pieces of information regarding the study of *Cloudstreet*. It is imperative to note that the VCAA has determined that **only the first act of *Cloudstreet***, will be used for assessment and examination purposes.

## IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING ASSESSMENT /

### The VCAA official Theatre Studies Playlist outline notes that:

**VCE Theatre Studies students are only required to analyse the first act of *Cloudstreet* for assessment purposes.** This act ends with the character Quick announcing he is leaving home (page 44 of the script published by Currency Press). No reference to the play beyond this point should be analysed in the written SAC or examination. However, it is recommended that students view the whole play in order to gain an understanding of the overall context of the production.

This means that while no questions will be asked about the play or the script beyond the end of Act One (Part One) page 44, teachers and students are being advised by VCAA to view the whole script in performance to enhance their understanding and knowledge of the production in its entirety.

# AMENDMENTS TO ORIGINAL SCRIPT



Teachers and students are reminded that the Director Matthew Lutton, in close consultation with playwright Justin Monjo, has made some amendments to the original script of the *Cloudstreet*.

**It is imperative that teachers use the original Currency Press script of *Cloudstreet* in conjunction with these amendments.** This slightly altered script is the interpretation that the students will see in performance and will be required to study for Unit 3, Outcome 3. Malthouse Theatre has provided access to these amendments for schools. They can be found [here](#).

The changes to the original script mentioned earlier, mean that the scene order and content is altered for the Prologue and scenes 1,2,3,4 and 8. There are changes to scenes in Part Two and Part Three but VCE Theatre Studies students only need to familiarise themselves with alterations to Part One up to page 44. The amendments bring a different structure to some aspects of the script in Part One. Important directorial and casting

decisions such as changing the character of BLACK MAN to STORYTELLER have been influenced by the script amendments. This is why students will need to familiarise themselves with the amended script prior to viewing the play in performance.

The nature of live theatre means that each performance will differ slightly. So, it is essential that the students' responses are based on the performance that they attend. This resource does not aim to provide definitive answers. Teachers are encouraged to use the Prompt materials in conjunction with other resources and broader classroom based research and discussion. To assist you with this, links to the new VCAA Theatre Studies Design and the support text Acting Smart—Theatre Studies/Version 8—have been included in the pack.

# CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

## CLLOUDSTREET – THE HISTORY OF THE NOVEL

*Cloudstreet*, released in 1991, was Tim Winton's fifth novel. Prior to its release, Tim was firmly on the radar of Australian readers and had already established himself as a new and important voice in the Australian literary landscape. He had won many awards for his previous writing. So, when Tim's eagerly awaited fifth novel, *Cloudstreet*, hit the shelves in March 1991, it was enthusiastically embraced by Australian readers, who had developed a thirst for Tim's exciting and unique writing style. The initial small print run sold out in a week.

*Cloudstreet* received multiple awards including: the 1991 Miles Franklin Award, the 1991 NBC Banjo Award for Fiction, the 1991 Western Australian Premier's Book Award for Fiction and the 1992 Deo Gloria Award (UK). Within a very short time, *Cloudstreet* had embedded itself into the hearts and minds of Australians. Creatives from other disciplines have paid tribute to the text, realising it through theatre, television and opera. The novel is considered an iconic Australian text.

Incredibly, the manuscript of *Cloudstreet* was nearly lost at Rome Airport. The Winton family had been living overseas supported by a grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council. They travelled to Ireland and Greece and stayed in an apartment in Paris. During this time—circa 1989—Tim penned the beginnings of *Cloudstreet*. Tim, his wife and young child were returning to Australia when the manuscript that Tim had been working on was accidentally left on the bus. Fortunately, an observant and very persistent Italian bus driver chased Tim and kept pointing back at the bus. Finally, Tim saw the grey, vinyl sports bag.

*'...I could have kissed the guy. It was only half a book at that stage, a couple of years' work—handwritten, typescript and the carbon copy, but I couldn't have reproduced it. I think it scares me more to think about it now.'*

—TIM WINTON

## CLLOUDSTREET – THE CREATION OF THE PLAY

### Playwrights – Nick Enright and Justin Monjo

Justin Monjo, born in the USA in New York, is a screenwriter and television producer. He studied at NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art), graduating in 1984. Justin had already adapted Tim Winton's novel, *That Eye, the Sky*, for stage when he embarked on adapting *Cloudstreet* in 1996.

Justin enlisted his former NIDA teacher Nick Enright AM to work with him on this adaptation. Nick was a distinguished and award-winning Australian playwright who wrote many highly regarded plays over his career including *On the Wallaby* (1982), *Daylight Saving* (1990), *Property of the Clan* (1993) and *Blackrock* (1997). Tragically, Nick passed away from melanoma in 2003. Nick was awarded an Order of Australia posthumously. The movie *Happy Feet* (2006) is dedicated to Nick.

## TIM WINTON – THE NOVELIST

Timothy Paul Winton was born on the 4th of August in 1960 in Perth, Western Australia. This article by Aida Edermariam for The Guardian gives a wonderful and insightful account of his life story.

[/ The Guardian, 2008](#)

There is a continuous motif of water in Tim's writing. He has always lived near the coast and has actively enjoyed the water. He has been a lifelong recreational surfer and boater. The river and each character's interaction with water in the *Cloudstreet* is highly charged and significant. Fish is the most effected by his near drowning and then is plagued by his longing to return to water. Below is a quote that gives insight into Tim's affinity with water.

*'When you're in the water you're almost weightless and that's freedom from gravity. I find it endlessly exciting.*

*Let's face it, you do nine months as a free diver in your mother's womb; you belong to a planet that's mostly water; your body is mostly water.*

*I don't think there's any mystery why we would be drawn to it – I think there's some kind of ancestral yearning. We all came from water. It feels like home...'*

[/ Tim Winton, ABC News](#)

A fierce advocate for the coastal and ocean environment, Tim has been proactive in working to save marine environments and creatures. He has written texts on the subject and has spoken for the Australian Marine Conservation Society. In 2003 he was awarded the Australian Society of Authors Medal for his environmental advocacy.

Tim has had an illustrious career. You can find more information on the novels and stories he has published on [Britannica here](#). This is a link to the novels and stories he has published to date. The link also cites a list of his numerous awards. His most recent novel, *The Shepherd's Hut*, published in 2018 is missing from the list.

## CLOUDSTREET – THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY

The play, which was the product of a collaboration between Company B (now Belvoir Street Theatre) and Black Swan State Theatre Company based in Western Australia, premiered at the Sydney Festival on the 3rd January, 1998. Appropriately—considering Tim Winton's strong connection to the sea and water—it was staged in a warehouse at Berth 9, Darling Harbour (aka the King Street Wharf). The show was five and a half hours long. But audiences did not balk at the time commitment; they adored the production.

Following the Sydney Festival the play toured to Perth where it played in the Fremantle Dock Theatre. This was followed by a season at the Adelaide Playhouse in 1999 and then it moved into the Merlyn Theatre at Melbourne's Playbox Theatre Company (now Malthouse Theatre).

In June 2001 it had a return season in Sydney at the Theatre Royal. In July 2001 it played at the Southbank Playhouse (now QPAC) in Brisbane. Wherever the play went it continued to enchant, inspire and deeply move its audiences. Every night the play would receive a standing ovation. *Cloudstreet* went on to tour internationally.

*'Simply awesome. Cloudstreet is a winner from beginning to end ... something native, new, vast and unforgettable.'*

—SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

*'The audience is hooked into a dialogue that often touches the soul.'*

—THE AGE

Monjo and Enright's play adaptation had earned itself a brilliant reputation in the world of theatre.

SEASON





# PLOT OVERVIEW



Set in Western Australia, *Cloudstreet* is an epic novel that spans three decades, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The story primarily revolves around two families; the Lambs and the Pickles. The families are very different. But, both have experienced hardship and disappointment. The one thing they have in common, is that they share an address; Number 1, Cloud Street in an unidentified suburb in Perth.

The Pickles family consists of: Sam (father), Dolly (mother), Rose (eldest daughter), Ted (first son) and Chub (second son). Sam is an erratic breadwinner. He doesn't seem to be able to settle into stable work. Therefore, the Pickles family do not have a regular income. He is an incorrigible gambler who wastes any windfalls on betting. The Shifty Shadow governs Sam's life choices. The Shifty Shadow is luck and Sam believes that it moves.

*'...It was as though luck made choices, that it could think. If you greeted it, it came to you; if you shunned it, it backed away.'*

Dolly is a troubled, lonely and bitter woman damaged by her past and further demoralised by what she perceives as her husband's uselessness. She spends most of her time in the pub encouraging the advances of other men, neglecting her responsibilities. Rose is a bright, capable girl. But, she is forced to look after her father and the two boys to compensate for her mother's absence and neglect. Ted and Chub

are typical boys; more concerned with spending time with their friends, and when they are older, chasing girls. The Pickles have been living in Uncle Joel's hotel in Geraldton, Western Australia. The family is down on its luck. Dolly and the children live in the hotel while Sam works offshore on an island collecting guano (seabird faeces/ phosphate) used to make fertiliser.

Unfortunately, Sam has a catastrophic winch accident and the family is precariously close to falling on even harder times. Then in another twist of events, Uncle Joel, unexpectedly dies and leaves two thousand pounds and his property in Perth—Number One, Cloud Street—to Sam. The will imposes the condition that Sam must not sell the house for twenty years. So, the Pickles family moves from Geraldton to Perth and take up residence in the ramshackle old house by the railway line. The suburb is not named and Tim Winton has never revealed which suburb he had in mind, if he in fact had a specific one. But the general consensus seems to locate

the house in the West Leederville, Subiaco, Shenton Park area.

Due to the accident, Sam is unable to work. He loses the money they have been left so their situation is now dire. They have a huge house but no money. Eventually, Sam decides to let half the house out. This is when the Lambs arrive on the scene and the epic story of the two families '*...living in the great continent of a house...*' begins in earnest.

The Lambs family: Lester (father), Oriel (mother), Quick (eldest son), Fish (second son), daughters Hattie, Elaine and Red, and Lon (youngest son) are living a similar life of hardship in Margaret River, WA. They are a deeply religious family who work hard and conscientiously to overcome the difficulties that life confronts them with. The Lambs are a more united family than the Pickles; they have a more robust and honest family dynamic. However, they also become the victims of tragedy when Fish is nearly drowned while night fishing in the river. His mother Oriel frantically tries to revive Fish, pounding his chest and pleading with the Saviour Jesus to restore him to life and his family. Fish does start to breathe again but due to oxygen starvation he suffers irreversible brain damage. As a result of Fish's acquired brain injury the Lambs lose their faith and decide to leave Margaret River for Perth,

*'...you can't stay in a town when everything blows up in your face—especially the only miracle that ever happened to you.'*

The Lambs rent half of Number One, Cloud Street. They work hard, setting up a small grocery business that does very well. But there are tensions and griefs that the Lambs have to overcome.

The third strand of the story involves the Indigenous girls who inhabited the house in the 1930s. A wealthy, but amoral woman, who was encouraged by an Anglican priest to turn the house into a mission for Indigenous girls, owned Cloud Street. The woman followed the priest's suggestion. But, she was cruel by nature and the poor girls, many of whom were

stolen from their people and country, were treated appallingly. Many tried to escape but they were always caught and brought back to the house. Finally, one of the girls poisoned herself in desperation. The widow sent the remaining girls away and died soon after. The house was locked up with all the misery and despair trapped inside it. The restless spirits of the girls and the old woman haunted the house and occasionally the living got a sense of their presence. As a result of his brush with death, Fish Lamb can see and commune with the spirits, he seems to be existing in a limbo between the worlds of the living and the dead.

The novel is broken down into smaller named 'chapters'. The titles give the reader a tantalising sense of what may happen. For example, in the 'chapter' entitled 'A house on Cloud Street', Sam Pickles learns of his inheritance. These small 'chapters' are like separate episodes. Each character has many episodes written for them over the span of the novel. This structure was used to create the separate scenes in the script.

So these three story strands; the Lambs, the Pickles and the Indigenous presence, run alongside each other and, occasionally overlap when the characters move into another's physical, emotional or spiritual space.

Over the epic course of the narrative the characters deal with loss, guilt, hardship, love, and joy. The characters are all flawed and vulnerable. Winton's masterful writing allows the reader to connect with each character on a visceral and empathetic level. *Cloudstreet* represents a microcosm of Australian society during the mid 1900s. Therefore, it is very easy to identify with the experiences and memories in this magnificent tale.

## AUSTRALIA 1943 – 1963

The story is set over three significant decades in Australian history.

History is referenced often in *Cloudstreet*. Although mostly founded in fact, Winton a consummate storyteller, sometimes takes poetic licence, blurring fact and fiction. For example, the successful racehorse Eurythmic did exist and was Perth owned. But Eurythmic wasn't owned by Sam Pickles' uncle; Joel Morris Bloom. However, other historical events such as the story of the Nedlands Monster, Eric Edgar Cooke, are faithful to events.

Australia with a population of nearly 7 million people was barely in recovery from World War I (1914–18) and The Great Depression (1930–36) when World War II broke out in 1939. Australia was involved in World War II between September 1939 and September 1945. This was a time of great anxiety and uncertainty. Especially, for the more geographically isolated Australian west coast population, who felt uncomfortably close to the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, Singapore and New Guinea, the bombing of Pearl Harbour, Darwin, Broome, and Cairns. The Australian population was weary and psychologically scarred by strife. The parents in *Cloudstreet* were the children of this era and had grown up only knowing turmoil and hardship. This context goes a long way to explaining some of their behaviours as they search for certainty, stability, luck, and success.

*Cloudstreet* seems to start just shy of the end of World War II; probably circa 1943. Politically and psychologically, Australia still felt very attached to England and the Commonwealth. This would have been particularly obvious in Perth where a large percentage of the population was English migrants. Australia also formed a strong allegiance to America during the latter part of World War II. The 'Yanks', as they were fondly called, were romanticised. They represented protection and were regarded as the exemplar of democracy. The presence of Dolly's lover, the American pilot, represents the American presence in Australia at that time.

Following the end of World War I, Australia began to grow in prosperity and national confidence. The war had been won. Peace had arrived. The economy was beginning to pick up and jobs were available. Families began to feel as though they could start to make good lives for themselves. But, it was still a struggle for many who had lost their family members, their way or their health during the war. The younger generation—like the Lamb and Pickles children—were at the coalface of a new dawn.

The 1950s heralded a new age of an industrious, more affluent Australia. Large-scale manufacturing started to grow. Holden cars is one example of a successful brand. The Australian people generally had greater social and financial stability. Families were able to settle down, purchase homes and focus on growing and educating their children. Women, who had taken on many working roles during the war, were back being homemakers for the most part. However, a percentage of women worked or embarked on careers and higher education. Waves of post-war migrants from Europe had arrived in Australia. The government used the slogan 'Populate or Perish'. The most significant group were the 'Ten Pound Poms' followed closely by the Italian and Greek migrants.

Social conditions for the majority of the population were very good. There was still an obvious class structure; working class, middle class and the upper class. This would probably have been more evident in an isolated city like Perth. Black and white television was launched in Australia in 1956. Perth got TV broadcasting in the late 1950s. Until the advent of TV, most people regularly attended the cinema. Sir Robert Menzies was the Liberal Prime Minister. A position he held for 20 years between 1949 and 1966—almost the entire span of *Cloudstreet*. The end of the 1950s was characterised by a rebellious undercurrent rising. This was primarily led by the younger generation. Rock and Roll reared its head and young Australians followed the lead of other

young people in UK and America, Much to the unease of their elders, the young began their search for individual freedoms.

The population had grown to nearly 10.3 million by 1960. Australia was becoming a much more culturally diverse nation. But there was racism and antagonism towards the 'newcomers' from some quarters. The 1960s was an era of significant change for many groups in Australian society.

The middle class had grown with the arrival of the post-war babies nicknamed 'The Baby Boomers'. The Lamb and Pickles children were a little older than this generation. However, they would have been experiencing a sense of change around them.

One of the most significant movements was that of the young who demanded greater individual independence and freedom. In *Cloudstreet* Quick and Rose both leave home against their parents' wishes to search for a different life. This movement caused great inter-generational conflict. The traditional societal values of parents and elders were being brazenly challenged. Young people wanted sexual and personal freedoms. They were collectively defying social mores such as marriage before sex. The social stereotypes of the woman being a stay-at-home mother and the father being the sole breadwinner did not hold currency anymore. The traditional model of the nuclear family living happily in the suburbs was being rejected.

The younger generation were also politically engaged and proactive. The main cause of angst was Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Australia's involvement began in 1962 when military advisers were sent over. Australia joined the Americans in this theatre of war to stop the spread of Communism, which was seen as a threat. This potential spread was called 'the Domino Theory'; meaning Communism might come down to Australia because of our proximity to Asia. Many Australians, particularly the young, were appalled at the thought of

another war. They vehemently and actively opposed it, protesting on the streets and defying efforts to conscript the young men. The Peace Movement that found its roots in America took firm hold of Australia's youth.

In conjunction with these changes, larger numbers of women were entering the workforce and the traditional family model was beginning to alter to suit different, individual needs. The Civil Rights Movement brought the conversation about racial tolerance to the forefront. However, our own Indigenous people remained ignored, unsupported and under-represented for the most part. Massive shifts in culture were also occurring. Contemporary music was becoming more mainstream. Travel was more accessible for middle class families. Access to books and popular films from overseas was more immediate. Eating out at the pub or the Chinese restaurant or having takeaway fish and chips or a hamburger was affordable for the average family. Many Australians owned a caravan or a beach house. Annual Christmas holidays were usually spent by the sea.

So, Australia was growing up. It was developing its own unique identity and culture. It's values were undergoing a brisk audit at the hands of the younger rebels and the older thinkers in society. The 60s was a massive time of change throughout the nation.



# INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS



But there is a very important group of Australians who seem to be constantly missing from our nation's history. The Indigenous people of Australia are often absent from the national conversation.

During the 1900s, despite serving in all deployments of Australian defence services and having populations in all states, the Indigenous people remained largely invisible to governments and most of the mainstream population. Just like the troubled spirits of the Indigenous girls in the *Cloudstreet* house, they were ghosts in their own country.

In fact, this is still a troubling reality today on many levels. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders only gained the right to vote in federal elections in 1962—just when the story of *Cloudstreet* comes to an end. In a state election Queensland extended the right to vote to these groups well after the other states in 1965. A national referendum was held in May 1967. Ninety percent of the Australian population voted 'Yes' to counting Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in the national census, and for Indigenous people to be subject to the Commonwealth laws rather than just state laws. 'Sorry Day' was instigated in May 1998. This day was dedicated as a day of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

In May 2000, 250,000 people walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of an apology to the Stolen Generations and for recognition of Indigenous people in the constitution. In an historic moment for the nation, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd gave an apology speech to the Stolen Generations of the nation on the 13th February 2008. It could be suggested that in Winton's story, the girls who were imprisoned in the *Cloudstreet* house represent the stolen children and the suffering of the Aboriginal people of WA. More recently there have been inroads into easing Indigenous suffering. Active steps have been taken to include the original people of Australia into the constitution. But, frustratingly, the struggle that has been raging since 1995, to have Indigenous Australians recognised in the constitution, is still not satisfactorily resolved. Some emotional statements from Indigenous spokespeople sum up the urgent need for resolution of this matter. There is still much healing to be done.

*'...work towards constitutional recognition of our prior ownership and rights.'*

—YOLNGU AND BININJ CLANS OF ARNHAM LAND TO KEVIN RUDD, JULY 2008

*'...bring my people in from the cold, bring us into the nation.'*

—GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU, DECEMBER 2009

*'...for the nation's soul.'*

—LOWITJA O'DONOGHUE, THE INAUGURAL CHAIR OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMISSION, JUNE, 2011

# THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Tim has threaded the haunting presence of the Aboriginal people of Western Australia throughout his text. When the spirits appear, the reader or viewer has a sense of mystery and feels that they are glimpsing or have entered another world or realm. Some of the encounters are charged with sorrow and horror. Other moments are more magical and create feelings of awe and wonder. All of these episodes have either a nightmarish or dreamlike quality that hints at the present witnessing the past.

In 1826 a small garrison was established at Albany to deter French exploration and settlement of the southern coast. Then in 1829, 41 years after the first settlement of Australia at Sydney Cove, NSW, Captain James Stirling led the first party of settlers to Perth. It had been determined that the area around the Swan River would make an excellent new British colony. Unlike the east coast colonies, this was to be a free settlement with no convicts. Prior to the first settlement of the Swan River Colony, the local Indigenous people, the Whadjuk—later grouped under the name of the larger nation called the Noongar—had inhabited the area 50 kilometers to north, east and south-west of the current CBD of Perth, (Boorloo) for 65,000 years. The western boundary was in place before the end of the ice age that led to the rise in sea levels approximately 15,000 years ago.

Ships had occasionally come into this area for water, food and scientific exploration, but the arrival of the first white colonists heralded the demise of the Noongar and subsequently the other Aboriginal nations of WA. It could be argued that the Aboriginal people of Western Australia bore some of the worst atrocities at the hands of the colonial settlers. Perhaps this was because

of the vastness and remoteness of the state. Or, it was caused by the cultural and spiritual ignorance and arrogance that the colonists displayed toward the local people; ‘natives’ as they were called by the colonists. Or, possibly the greed and exploitive attitude surrounding ownership of the land’s mineral and pastoral wealth drove the desire to control and eradicate the Aboriginal people. In all probability the appalling treatment of the original custodians of the land was driven by a combination of all these factors. The new settlers brought the knowledge of how to settle land from experiences on the eastern seaboard. So, their ‘laws’ and practices were quickly and ruthlessly implemented. The Noongar, who had originally accepted the colonists believing them to be the ghosts of their ancestors returning to country, began to realise that these new inhabitants of their country were culturally and socially very different. For example, the new people killed and ate the swans and kangaroos without compunction, but when a Noongar person killed a sheep that person was severely punished. Tensions increased as the colonists began to clear and occupy the country and disrespect sacred sites. The Noongar very quickly found themselves under threat and eventually the killings started. At first Noongars were shot as reprisal for killing livestock or ‘stealing’ provisions. The Noongar retaliated, spearing colonists who had murdered their family members. The whole situation then spiraled out of control and the hurt and anger still resonates today.

## **Some of the worst examples of the cruel treatment of the Aboriginal population include:**

- / The establishment of ‘The Native Penal Institution’ on Rottnest Island, where in a perversion of the sentence handed down to the English convicts, the Noongar were sentenced ‘to be transported across the seas’. Noongar boys and men were sent to Rottnest and imprisoned in shocking conditions. This was torture for them.

Firstly, the Noongar had no understanding of white law and therefore had no idea why they had been sent there. Secondly, they could see their country, which they pined for desperately, across the water. Many of them died from heartbreak, disease or malnutrition.

- / The practice where over 2,000 Indigenous people were kept as slaves by the pastoralists. Tricked into marking a 'contract' with an 'X', these illiterate people unwittingly became the property of the pastoralist. They were used as slave labour and some of the women were used as concubines. If they tried to flee they were tracked and caught. Punishments were extreme and not scrutinised by authorities.
- / The Education Act of Western Australia 1893, that allowed parents of white children to object to an Aboriginal child attending their child's school. This act denied Aboriginal children educational opportunities.
- / The Aborigines Act, enacted in 1905. The act encouraged the establishment of reserves and missions and introduced the role of Protectors. Under the act Aboriginal people were prohibited from towns and cohabitation of Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men was prohibited. The Aborigines Act also legalised the removal of Aboriginal children from their natural families. This allowed the state or officers of the state to remove Indigenous children from their parents who were deemed, '... biologically capable of having children but not socially capable of raising them'. This is when the Stolen Generations began and it continued into the 1970s.
- / The results of a survey run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1994 that found that of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders aged over 25 years, 10% were removed from their families. Horrifyingly, in Western Australia this equated to 25% of

the Indigenous population.

- / A 1927 law that until relatively recently created a prohibited area of 5 square kilometers surrounding central Perth that was ruled off limits to Noongar people. Noongar who worked within this area had to carry a pass and ID. There was a 6pm curfew and Noongar in this area or travelling through it after curfew had to have a permit. This law was only revoked in 1953.
- / So, this was the world of the Noongar people from the time of first settlement. It is easy to understand and empathise with the ghosts in Tim Winton's story. They represent the shocking experiences that their ancestors went through and they embody the hurt and pain. Fish Lamb can see, hear and feel the emotions of these people. Sometimes the other characters enter their realm and can see them as well. These are cathartic moments in the work and they serve to transform and heal the characters. Matthew Lutton describes these moments as 'The past existing with the present'. He also talks about making the Indigenous characters and their plight 'visible' to the other characters and the audience of *Cloudstreet*.

This link to [ABC Splash](#) provides further insight into the traditional custodians of Perth and their first encounters with the first colonists. Please make sure you verify the factual content.

You are also encouraged to conduct your own broader research into the Indigenous history of Perth. A suggested area of investigation could be a timeline of Aboriginal history in Western Australia, focussing on the events that effected the Noongar population from the beginning of colonisation of Perth in 1829 to 2019.

# CLOUDSTREET /

## PERTH 1943 – 1963

The majority of the play takes place in Perth. This is where the Cloud Street house is situated. It is very important that you develop an understanding of this context so that you can analyse and evaluate how the creative team have tried to convey this context—Perth in the mid 1940s to the mid 1960s—to the audience. To explore Perth’s history the following sites are suggested. These sites are only suggested to assist you in starting an exploration of context. Please check the information before using it.

- / [Another Sunny Day In Western Australia](#) – film (National Film and Sound Archive of Australia)
- / [Memories of 60s Perth WA](#) – film (National Film and Sound Archive of Australia)
- / [Postcard from Perth](#) – film (National Film and Sound Archive of Australia)

## GERALDTON, MARGARET RIVER, THE WHEAT BELT, WA 1943 –1963

The smaller regional towns of Geraldton and Margaret River feature in *Cloudstreet*. The Pickles live in Geraldton before moving to Perth and taking possession of the house. The Lambs live in Margaret River which they flee in shame and grief after Fish’s accident. Quick spends time as a roo (kangaroo) shooter in the wheat belt of Western Australia. The wheatbelt wraps around Perth, stretching 400 kilometers to the east.

Then down to the south below Albany and around to Esperance. It finishes about 300 kilometers above Geraldton. So Quick could have been anywhere in this vast cropping territory.

Conduct some extra research into these areas of Western Australia so that you can understand some of the history and gain an impression of the state of Western Australia during the decades the play covers.



SEASON



## VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW LUTTON



### INITIAL PRE-REHEARSAL INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR MATTHEW LUTTON

Use the link to the right to jump to specific questions or click the image above to watch the whole interview.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What drew you to directing Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- What was the rationale behind the amendments to the play?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- Both *Cloudstreet* the novel and the play feature Indigenous voices expressed in the text as the presence of ghosts in the house. In creating this adaptation, how have you made these voices more explicit?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- Can you discuss Fish Lamb's role in the play and your decision to cast an actor with an intellectual disability? (direct link to question [here](#))
- What do you think is important for students to note about the theatrical form of this production? (direct link to question [here](#))
- What are the key challenges in making *Cloudstreet*?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- Spirituality does not mean the same thing for all characters in *Cloudstreet*. How are different forms of spirituality explored?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- The house on Cloud Street is a key motif in the play, almost another 'character'. How is this realised for the stage? (direct link to question [here](#))
- The ensemble for this adaptation of *Cloudstreet* is smaller than previous productions. How have you managed the reduced cast?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- What performance techniques or styles are you planning on using in creating *Cloudstreet*? (direct link to question [here](#))
- In what ways do you reveal the darkness within *Cloudstreet*?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- Some of the creative team behind *Cloudstreet* have worked with you before. How long has the creative process for *Cloudstreet* been going on?  
(direct link to question [here](#))
- *Cloudstreet* is multidimensional. Are you brave enough to nominate a few of the major themes within this piece? (direct link to question [here](#))
- How do you feel about the romanticism or nostalgia in *Cloudstreet*?  
(direct link to question [here](#))

# VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH *CLOUDSTREET* CAST IAN MICHAEL, ARIELLE GRAY & BERT LABONTÉ



## REHEARSAL INTERVIEW WITH CAST MEMBERS IAN MICHAEL, ARIELLE GRAY & BERT LABONTÉ

Use the links to the right to jump to specific questions or click the image above to watch the whole interview.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



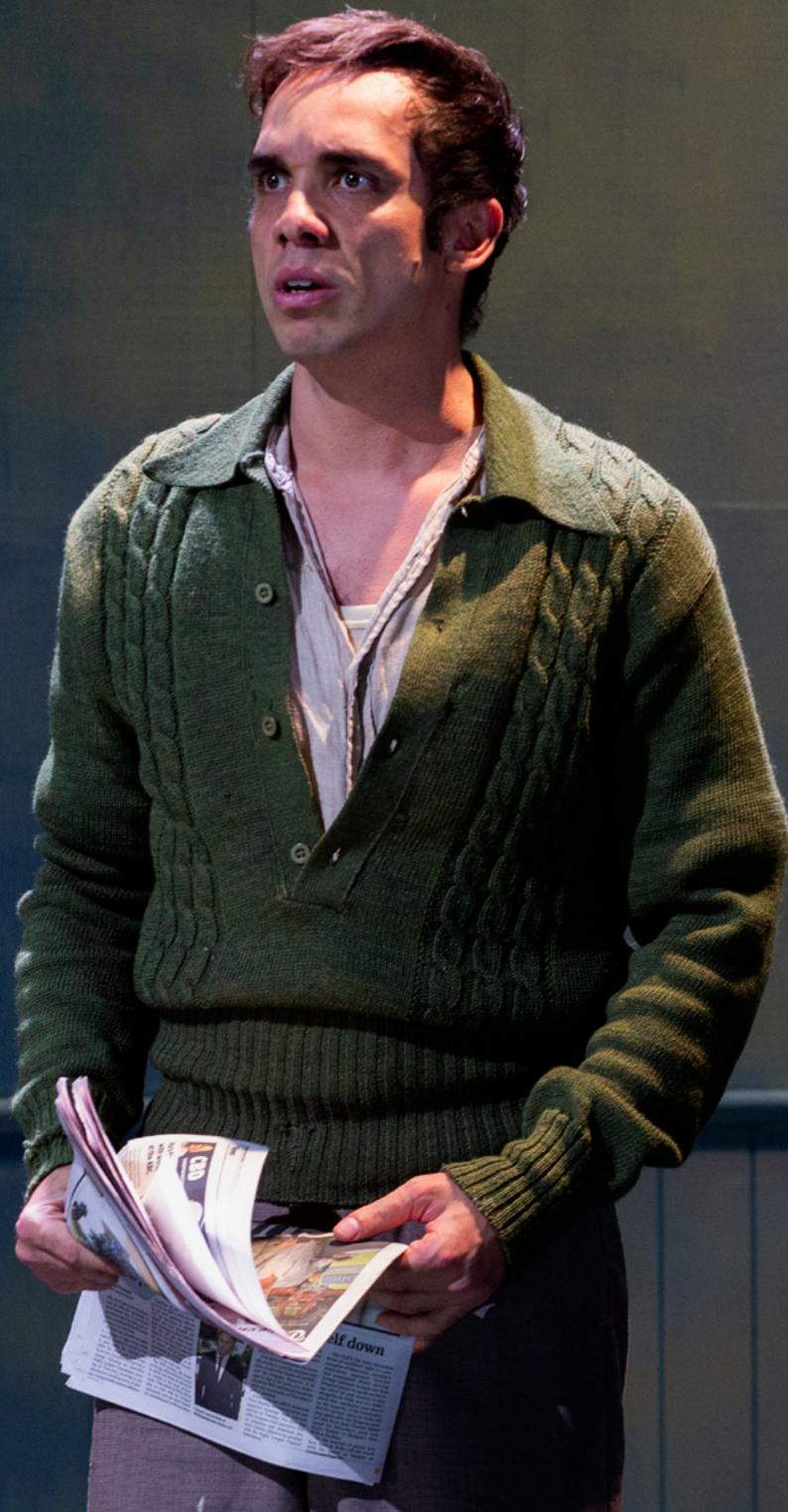
- What are the highlights of being involved in this production of *Cloudstreet*?
- Ian, as a proud Noongar from Western Australia how does your identity determine and shape your role in *Cloudstreet*?
- Arielle and Bert, how does it feel to be working alongside First Nations people who are culturally connected to place where *Cloudstreet* is set?
- Can you talk to us about the idea of colour-blind casting and what this means for actors in the future of theatre?
- What is required of you as an actor to keep the rhythm and fluidity of the narrative going through such an epic piece with short, sharp transitions?
- Could you nominate what the hardest part of the show is for you at the moment just three weeks into rehearsal?
- What would you like your audience to take away from seeing *Cloudstreet*?

SEASON





# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES & INFORMATION



# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES & INFORMATION

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS TASK.

UNIT 3, AREA OF STUDY 3 IS FOCUSED ON ANALYSING AND EVALUATING AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPT IN PRODUCTION. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO:

- 1 / Analyse and evaluate the relationship between the written script and its interpretation on the stage
- 2 / Study the ways the interpretation on stage draws on and interprets the contexts of the script examining what decisions have been made about acting, direction, design, the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition.\* (\*for a definition of this new area of knowledge see Acting Smart Theatre Studies, Version 8, page 16)
- 3 / Evaluate the ways theatre practitioners such as the director, actors, designers or dramaturg have contributed to the interpretation on stage
- 4 / Study how the implied theatre styles and contexts implied in the script are interpreted when the play is performed to an audience
- 5 / Develop theatre terminology and expressions that describe how the script has been interpreted imaginatively and creatively

# ACTIVITY ONE

The first activity should be familiarising yourself with the script. You need to read the script prior to attending the play. Remember that Malthouse Theatre's version that you will see in performance includes amendments to the original script that replace or slightly alter some scenes. You must use the amendments in conjunction with the Currency Press edition of *Cloudstreet*. You are only required to study the script up to the end of the first act– Part One (with the character Quick announcing he is leaving home (page 44 of the script published by Currency Press)). There are many ways to read the script. You might read it alone or as a class, or in smaller groups. Make sure you take notes while reading through the script. Follow the suggested dot points below. These notes will help you with the tasks following your reading of the script.

## KEY INITIAL WRITTEN SCRIPT STUDY TASKS AND QUESTIONS /

Make your own notes first and then go through the questions linked to each dot point to test your initial knowledge of the play.

### 1 / MAKE BRIEF NOTES ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

Who are they? What are their relationships to each other? Are there any unique characteristics amongst the characters? The ensemble of twelve actors plays many different roles. How might the director solve this?

*'This production works to keep the Indigenous presence at the forefront.'* –MATTHEW LUTTON

How has he decided to achieve this?

### 2 / WRITE OR SKETCH SOME OF YOUR OWN IDEAS ABOUT ASPECTS OF DIFFERENT DESIGN AREAS

How might the costume designer dress the characters to reflect the three decades of the play? The characters age by twenty years. How might this be achieved? Can you find any specific script references to any of the characters that could inform design decisions?

### 3 / ISOLATE LANGUAGE OR REFERENCES THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

The characters speak colloquially. Some of the words and slang they use is from past eras. Were you able to find the meanings of words such as: cobbler (page 1), reffos (page 12) and quid (page 19)? How does the spoken dialogue and references help the audience understand the context of the play?

### 4 / NOTE MOMENTS IN THE SCRIPT THAT EVOKE STRONG REACTIONS OR EMOTIONS

*'The characters are lovable. You love them, worry for them, want for them.'* –MATTHEW LUTTON

Can you isolate sections of the script where you feel any of these emotions for the characters? How might this moment be portrayed in performance?

## 5 / ISOLATE SOME KEY SCENES OR KEY MOMENTS OF DIALOGUE /

Which scenes do you consider significant and why?

*'Some experiences are beyond dialogue...mystical experiences make past and present blend.'* – MATTHEW LUTTON

In what ways might these moments be theatrically realised and conveyed to an audience without dialogue? Which scenes do you consider significant and why?

## 6 / NOTE IMPORTANT PLOT POINTS

Create a chart that visually depicts where you think the most important plot points or highest points of dramatic tension in the script occur. Keep this chart to refer to after you have seen the play in performance. Following your viewing of the play, you can make an analysis and evaluation of the how the elements of theatre composition supported these moments during the production.

## 7 / WRITE OR DISCUSS SOME INITIAL IDEAS ABOUT HOW THE PLAY MIGHT BE INTERPRETED THROUGH DESIGN

*'The house is a character that is just as important as the Lambs and the Pickles'* –MATTHEW LUTTON

What decisions might the set, sound and lighting designers make to create a sense of the *Cloudstreet* house being a character? Can you find references in the script to the house that make it seem alive?

## 8 / CONSIDER THE INFLUENCE OF PLACE AND LANDSCAPE ON DESIGN

Geraldton, Margaret River and the wheat belt feature in the text. Research the history and landscape of these areas. Looking at images of these areas should provide you with some ideas about how these places look. Consider how the history and 'look' of these locations might influence the various designers working on the production of *Cloudstreet*?

## 9 / TRY TO IDENTIFY ANY CHALLENGES WITHIN THE SCRIPT AND SPECULATE AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT BE OVERCOME

*'Vastness and claustrophobia. Outdoors and urban.'* –MATTHEW LUTTON

*'A focus on the humble and the epic.'* –MATTHEW LUTTON

These statements give us insight into the complexity of this play and some of the challenges that the production team faces. Consider how such complex ideas and atmospheres might be presented to an audience.

## 10 / CONSIDER WHICH THEATRE STYLES MIGHT BE USED IN THE PLAY /

Matthew Lutton describes this production of *Cloudstreet* as having naturalistic scenes intermingled with epic moments. All taking place in a non-naturalistic setting with minimalistic staging. What theatre styles might be utilised for this production?

# ACTIVITY TWO

The next activity requires an examination of contexts. Contextual research and knowledge underpins every aspect of the study of an interpretation of a play. Context informs and influences every decision that the creatives in various production roles make. To fulfill the second requirement (#2) you will need to examine various contexts.

## CONTEXTS FOR SUGGESTED RESEARCH /

- / The history of Tim Winton
- / The history of the original novel
- / The background of the playwrights who adapted the novel for stage
- / The history of the play
- / The contexts evident or implied in the script

The contextual information in this Prompt Pack provides a springboard for your research and some content for discussion. Watch the videos provided. While reading and watching it is suggested that you make notes and conduct some broader research of your own. These notes will enable you to analyse and evaluate how the interpretation on the stage drew on the different contexts in the written script, and how the contextual information influenced the decisions made about the acting, direction, design, the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition.

## ATTENDING THE PLAY

When you attend the play, give the performance your full attention. Do not make notes during the performance. You could make quick notes during interval and/or when you get home or the next day.

It is best to write things down soon after you have seen the play.

To prompt your memory we have provided a table with the scene breakdown of the play and room for notes. You can download a Microsoft Word version of the table to edit digitally [here](#).



# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES & INFORMATION



# THE FOCUS OF UNIT 3, AREA OF STUDY 3, OUTCOME 3

***On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the creative and imaginative interpretation of a written script in production to an audience.***

VCAA Theatre Studies Study Design (page 22)

## **DEFINITIONS /**

**ANALYSE** – *to look at something closely, methodically and in detail and to consider how it's formed by its various parts or essential elements. ..In doing so you make sense of something including how and why it happened.*

ACTING SMART THEATRE STUDIES V8, page 8

## **TWO KEY QUESTIONS /**

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

**EVALUATE** – *to assess or judge the value of something... Express your opinion about the quality, merit or success of what you have seen.*

ACTING SMART THEATRE STUDIES V8, page 20

## **THREE KEY QUESTIONS /**

WHAT DID I THINK OF THAT CHOICE?

WHAT EFFECT DID IT HAVE ON THE AUDIENCE?

WAS THE EFFECT NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE?

Essentially you are being asked to consider the *what, how* and *why* of the production you have seen.

To answer these questions you will need to support your answers with direct and specific evidence from the interpretation you saw in performance.

The contextual information and pre-show should have provided a base for deeper understanding and critical exploration of the script in performance.

# CONTEXTS

**As part of the suggested activities prior to seeing this interpretation of *Cloudstreet* in performance, you made an examination of the many contexts of the wider world of the written script. Consider and discuss how different members of the creative team applied their area of design to creatively and imaginatively capture and convey these implied context/s to the audience.**

Do you think these decisions were successful in conveying the various context/s?

How did the application of the various theatre practitioners' design concepts differ to how you initially imagined the contexts might be presented to an audience?

Matthew Lutton has described the set as having 6 different states:

- / Domestic
- / Rural
- / Nature
- / Adolescence
- / Murder
- / Storyteller

These states also link to different contexts.

Can you isolate some of these 'states' and describe how Zoë Atkinson's set design altered during the performance to create them? How did these states help to convey context to the audience? Remember to only use examples from Act One, (Part One) – up to Page 44.

# PRODUCTION ROLES

The *Cloudstreet* production team is comprised of the following theatre practitioners:

DIRECTOR / **MATTHEW LUTTON**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR / **KATT OSBORNE**  
SET & COSTUME DESIGN / **ZOË ATKINSON**  
LIGHTING DESIGN / **PAUL JACKSON**  
SOUND DESIGN / **J. DAVID FRANZKE**  
COMPOSITION / **ELIZABETH DRAKE**

**Each of the designers, in collaboration with the other members of the production team, made deliberate design decisions to support the overall directorial vision for this interpretation of *Cloudstreet*.<sup>\*</sup> These choices were made taking many considerations into account. Some of the challenges included:**

- / The number of scenes (102)
- / The rapid scene transitions
- / The extended length of the play (over two extended parts and three decades)
- / The many different locations (outside, inside, domestic, rural, on/in water, mystical)
- / A huge number of characters
- / Profound changes of mood and atmosphere

**Explore how each of the members of the production team created designs that overcame some of the innate challenges of staging *Cloudstreet*.**

Make some annotated sketches to illustrate your answer/s.

Were these creative decisions effective?

*\*Note: For deeper insight into Matthew Lutton's directorial vision for *Cloudstreet*, view his video interview (page 38).*

**The director, Matthew Lutton, is directing a cast of 12 actors. Seven of the actors play the major roles; Greg Stone (Lester Lamb), Alison Whyte (Oriel Lamb), Ben Oakes (Fish Lamb), Guy Simon (Quick Lamb), Bert LaBonté (Sam Pickles), Natasha Herbert (Dolly Pickles) and Brenna Harding (Rose Pickles). The other five actors: Arielle Gary, Ebony McGuire, Mikayla Marks, Ian Michael and Scott Sheridan play multiple roles.**

How did the director and the actors overcome some of the challenges of the production? You might consider aspects such as:

- / The characters aging over 3 decades
- / Actors playing multiple roles
- / Quick scene transitions
- / Needing to sustain the right energy for a lengthy performance
- / Managing props and elements of the set
- / Fluidly incorporating design elements such as lighting, sound and costume into the performance

Select examples from some of the Act One/Part One scenes (Prologue to Scene 42) to justify your answers.

Select a scene when an actor is delivering a monologue and describe the actor's use of the lighting/set/costume.

# THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES

## DEFINITION /

**THEATRE TECHNOLOGIES** – *Mechanical, digital and electrical technologies that are theatre specific.*

ACTING SMART THEATRE STUDIES V8, page 33

**This production of *Cloudstreet* is rich and complex. Yet the set is outwardly quite simple—a large three-sided acting space. The acting space is brought to life through the use of various technologies—of note are the moving ‘walls’ that create different locations and spaces within the set.**

Referring to three examples of the use of the moving walls, comment on how different contexts, atmospheres, moods and ideas were conveyed to the audience.

Another thing to consider is the idea of the house being a character. Were theatre technologies used to create a sense of the house being a living entity?

The motif of water is very strong throughout the play. How was this presented to the audience? Were theatre technologies utilised?

In what ways did different theatre technologies support and assist the rapid transitions between scenes?

Isolate some other examples of the use of theatre technologies in the performance of *Cloudstreet*.

## ELEMENTS OF THEATRE COMPOSITION

**Practitioners use elements of theatre composition to organise components of a theatre production to create a deliberate effect, realising their aims and intentions and/or those of the creative production team.**

VCAA Theatre Studies, Study Design, page 10

**The elements of theatre composition are:**

- / Cohesion
- / Motion
- / Rhythm
- / Emphasis
- / Contrast
- / Variation

ACTING SMART THEATRE STUDIES V8 has a very comprehensive section on the elements of theatre composition, pages 15 – 19

How might Malthouse Theatre’s production of *Cloudstreet* align with these elements?

**COHESION** / relates to two major aspects of the play in performance—the vision for the interpretation of the work and how the concepts for the realisation of the overall vision ‘hang together’ in performance. Reflect on Matthew’s video interview relating to his directorial vision for *Cloudstreet* and the themes and ideas he wanted to convey. Is the production a success in terms of cohesion?

**MOTION** / is about the ‘movement’ of the piece. This might be the blocking of the actors or the positioning, pattern, arrangement of design elements. Students might consider the use of Zoë’s set, Paul’s lighting, J.David’s sound, the actors’ use of the acting space and the director’s blocking choices to explain motion.

**RHYTHM** / focusses on pace and timing. These combine to create tempo. Some good focus points in this production could be the duration and transitions of the scenes, the delivery of the dialogue by the actors and the emotional line of the script—including moments of dramatic tension.

**EMPHASIS** / relates to the areas of the production that are given strong focus or significance. As I mentioned earlier, *Cloudstreet* is complex and Matthew wants to emphasise certain meanings, ideas and themes of the script. So you should look for aspects of this production that seem to stand out through the delivery of the dialogue or through the application of the different design areas. For example—how is the Indigenous presence highlighted in the production? How are the mystical, spiritual or horrific moments realised through direction, acting and design?

**CONTRAST** / is about the opposing aspects of the production. *Cloudstreet* has many examples of this. For example, the fundamental ideas of the story offer contrast.

- / The Indigenous experience of living in Western Australia as opposed to the ‘white’ experience of living in the same place
- / The values and aspirations of the older and younger generations
- / The claustrophobic existence of the people who dwell in the house as opposed to their experiences when out in the natural world
- / Hope and joy contrasting with despair and disappointment
- / The different worlds within the play– the real world, the spiritual world and the world that Fish exists within

**CONTRAST** / can also be found in the variety of settings, the atmosphere or mood and the different personalities and values of the characters.

You could examine how different theatre practitioners used their expertise and imagination to highlight contrasts of the play in order to engage and impact the audience.

**VARIATION** / can relate to conflict, energy, intensity, tension (dramatic tension) and use of space. To explore this element you could consider:

- / How the actors use variation to craft and sustain their performance
- / How director Matthew Lutton has blocked his scenes using different aspects of variation to engage and effect his audience.

- / How different members of the creative team have harnessed variation to create atmosphere and mood and convey meaning to the audience.

The key thing to remember here is that these elements are **deliberately selected** and applied to provoke a specific level of engagement and/or reaction from the audience. In other words, the elements of composition are used to create meaning for the audience. The elements of composition may or may not all exist at the same time. Rather they should work seamlessly together to support the interpretation of a script.

Earlier in the pre-show activities (page 46) you were asked to create a chart that visually depicted where you thought the most important plot points or highest points of dramatic tension in the script occurred. Following your viewing of the play, you can now make an analysis and evaluation of the how the elements of theatre composition supported and conveyed these moments during the production.

## USE OF THEATRE STYLES

**Matthew Lutton touches on his use of theatre styles in his video interview. Here is an overview:**

- / Many of the scenes are staged naturalistically—those where the characters are living their everyday lives and speaking to each other conversationally. However it is important to note that only minimalistic props will be used throughout the performance so the settings will not be naturalistically presented.
- / Some scenes involve an actor using direct address. In these moments, the character talks about an event—what they did or said, why they did or said this and how this made them feel. They often reflect and comment on their actions and choices, rather like a Greek Chorus. These are moments when the characters are very vulnerable and honest. They reveal a great deal about themselves and their circumstances to the audience in a very intimate way.
- / There will be moments of immersion when the characters come into the audience and interact directly with them.
- / During the scenes where the characters are in a mystical realm, a dreamlike state or state of fear, the acting style will reflect elements of Non-naturalism and Expressionism.

An epic narrative, Greek Chorus, Naturalism, Non-naturalism and Expressionism have all been mentioned. But, remember, no one theatre style is applied throughout the whole production. Rather, Matthew Lutton, *Cloudstreet*'s director, has applied elements of different styles to interpret the script and to evoke or provoke the audience response he wants at that given moment in the narrative.







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